

the decision that was made by the Federal judge today that ruled against eliminating the recounting that the people of Florida want. The judge called the Republican argument serious, but turned them aside, saying it was a matter for the State, not Federal courts, to decide.

Vice President GORE today said something that I think should apply reasonably to all of our thought processes. He said, "That is why I have believed from the start that, while time is important, it is even more important that every vote is counted and counted accurately."

There is no constitutional crisis here. Let us stop raising the ante. Let us stop spinning it so that people are in fear. I know there is a bit of humor around the world, but I believe we live in the greatest nation, and I am still proud of America. So let the world laugh a little bit. They always laugh at people they envy. Let us show them that, in the calm of day and night, we can quietly recount the votes and determine who the next President of the United States will be.

I tell you for one, supporting Vice President GORE, that I am willing to support whoever the new President is, and I would simply ask that person to represent all of us.

It is a tragedy what is going on in the State of Florida with the arguing back and forth, making distinctions about the State of Illinois or the State of New Mexico. The key is that the State of Florida is in play. Those 25 votes will name the next President of the United States, so it is there in the State of Florida where we should be most accurate with the votes.

Frankly, those voters deserve the right to be heard; and they deserve the right to have the questions answered about irregularities in the balloting, of being turned away, of being stopped, as they will.

I would ask the Secretary of State of that particular great State that she should listen to the people of the State. Does Governor Bush want Republican counties to be counted? I have no problem with that. I believe in fairness and justice, and if those counties can be recounted, then so be it. Yes, there will be further tests when the votes come in from the absentee balloting, and I believe that will be an added addition.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply hope that we allow the will of the people to be heard in their totality.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I make a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, is it not appropriate under the rules of the House that those in the gallery not express their favor or disfavor to a statement on the floor by a Member?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, could the Chair remind those in the gallery that that is inappropriate; that they are represented in the House by their representative, and they should not express their opinion for or against statements made on the floor?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House, and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

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IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF D.C. APPROPRIATION BILL CRITICAL FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to make an urgent request of this body. This body may be about to go out until December 5. If it does so without passing the D.C. appropriation, we are putting the capital of the United States in mortal danger.

The District appropriation was passed 3 weeks ago. It is being held up now as a vehicle for the Commerce-Justice bill. I appreciate the conversations I have had with Members and their staffs and the way in which the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and the way in which apparently the Senate is willing to release the D.C. appropriation. We found a way for the D.C. appropriation to be freed, while leaving the status quo in place as if it continued to be a vehicle to carry over the Commerce-Justice bill. That is the only reason it is being held.

Mr. Speaker, the crisis we face now is not only that this is a living, breathing city that cannot start any new programs; there is a special crisis. We face the possible closing of our city hospital, D.C. General, and its public clinics. The reason is that although the District can move around money to form a new, smaller hospital, the money for the transition costs, including the costs of severance pursuant to layoffs mandated in the appropriation bill, cannot, in fact, take place until the appropriation bill is passed. If we wait until December 5, we will be ap-

proaching the date when the hospital must close because it has run out of money.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking this House, before we go home, to release the D.C. appropriation. Nothing would be lost in freeing the D.C. appropriation, because the D.C. appropriation could be passed as a CR by reference, and that would leave the D.C. appropriation as it is now, except, in effect, it would slide from under its present vehicle and be passed as a bill, while the present situation of a vetoable D.C.-Commerce-Justice bill would remain. I know that sounds like gobbledegook; but in fact that is the way it would occur. The status quo would remain; but in fact, the appropriation would pass, because the CR would remain there as if our appropriation had not passed.

I appreciate that there has been considerable movement by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), and by Senator STEVENS to be helpful; and I have spoken with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), and he appears to believe that the Commerce-Justice D.C. bill could be passed or, indeed, signed by the President. I have spoken with Jack Lew. Jack Lew informs me that surely the House must know that that bill will be vetoed. I do not know what it is that makes the Speaker believe that this is a nonvetoable bill, because that is what he has told me, that it contains at least some of what the President wants; but I am informed by the White House that most of the reason that this bill was vetoed remains, and it will continue to be vetoed.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking that the District be extracted from this mess. I recognize that if, in extracting us, some change that the House wanted not to make would be a sacrifice; but in fact, no such change is required on our part, because we found a technical way out for the District of Columbia, while leaving the situation as if the same vetoable bill was there.

There is lots to lose here for the District. Not only do we have all new programs, but also imagine trying to run a city 6 weeks into the appropriation year without being able to do urgent things like hire 175 new police officers, 88 new fire officers, without being able to hire social workers necessary for children in foster care. We have had a child killed this year in foster care because there were not enough social workers. Imagine not being able to give money to five new charter schools, charter schools that the Congress has asked us to pass; and finally, imagine what will happen if the hospital closes and we have no way to move money around to keep it open or to pay even for the transport of sick people so that they can be cared for in another hospital.

Mr. Speaker, a way has to be found; and I ask that this House not go home tomorrow before that way is found.